

as must destroy the honour of the kingdom abroad and the happiness of the people at home, I considered it my duty to oppose the Whigs, to ensure their discomfiture, and, if possible, their destruction.

Let me recall to your recollection the extraordinary characteristic of the political world when I entered it. Gentlemen, the great safeguard of our liberties, the balance of parties, was destroyed. There was then no constitutional Opposition to keep the Government in check. The great Tory party, now so strongly constituted, was a shattered, a feeble, and a disheartened fragment, self-confirming their own inability to carry on the King's Government, and announcing an impending revolution. Had I been a political adventurer I had nothing to do but to join, the Whigs; but, conscientiously believing that their policy was in every respect pernicious, I felt it my duty to oppose them. But how were they to be opposed? Where were the elements of a party to keep the Government in check, and to bring back the old constitutional balance? I thought they existed in the Liberal Tories, and in those independent Reformers who had been returned to Parliament independent of the Whigs. I laboured for the union, and I am proud of it. Gentlemen, remember the Whig policy. They had a packed Parliament. They had altered the duration of Parliaments once before. They had the whole power of the State in their hands. I believed, and I still believe, that we were nearer to a Long Parliament than we imagined. I wished to break the strength of the Whigs by frequent elections, and by frequent appeals to a misgoverned people; therefore I advocated a recurrence to those triennial Parliaments which it was once the proudest boast of the Tories to advocate. I wished to give the country gentlemen a chance of representing the neighbouring towns, where they are esteemed, instead of the nominees of a sectarian oligarchy; therefore I proposed the adoption of the ballot, in the only constituencies willing to assume it. . . .

Had the Whigs remained in power — and it seemed to me, and the wisest men in England shared my conviction, that they were our masters for life — had, I repeat, they remained in power I considered the dismemberment of the empire inevitable; and, therefore, I tried to root them out. But, Gentlemen, great, ay, almost illimitable as was my confidence in Whig incapacity, I confess they far surpassed even my most sanguine expectations. The mighty Whig party which, had consented to a revolution to gain power fell to pieces; the vessel of the State righted itself; and now there is no necessity to cut away its masts.